U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Environment Subcommittee Hearing:
To the Depths, and Beyond: Examining Blue Economy Technologies

March 26th, 2025

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Franklin and Ranking Member Amo, for holding this informative hearing today.

My district, in Silicon Valley is really the heart of American innovation. However, the district also encompasses agricultural communities like the Salinas Valley, which also increasingly relies on innovation and technology for its success.

While my district is not directly coastal, the connection between ocean research, weather forecasting, and agriculture is undeniable. The same data and research that help us understand oceanic changes are critical for predicting droughts, managing water resources, and ensuring the stability of our food systems.

All of these are important topics to discuss in this hearing. However, we must first ask: how can the United States position itself as a leader in the global ocean economy when federal science is being dismantled by an unelected billionaire and his team of mostly unqualified 20-year-olds?

I am deeply concerned that the Trump-Musk Administration's efforts to gut federal agencies will hinder the government's ability to carry out Congressionally authorized activities that support public safety, economic prosperity, and scientific innovation.

Federal grants fund the foundational research that drives technological breakthroughs and sustains U.S. scientific leadership. These investments support cutting-edge climate models, advanced sensor technologies, and the next generation of scientists and engineers. Universities and industry across the country work closely with the public sector to translate research into real-world applications that benefit and protect millions of Americans. Unfortunately, continued disruptions are putting critical research and innovation in jeopardy- weakening the very foundation that our industries and global competitiveness rely on.

Meanwhile, both allies and adversaries are seizing the opportunity created by this uncertainty to recruit U.S. researchers, poaching valuable talent that could otherwise benefit our nation.

That is why last week, Democratic Science Committee Members introduced bills that would institute a moratorium on reductions in force for several federal science agencies until this Administration communicates its plans with Congress and this body passes a sensible budget.

While these cuts endanger our economic and national security on multiple fronts, no region exemplifies the consequences of this failure more than the polar regions. Notwithstanding President Trump's threats to seize control of Greenland, the United States has limited access to both the Arctic and Antarctic, and our outdated fleet of a couple of icebreakers is woefully inadequate for both research and national security. In contrast, Russia maintains a robust fleet of 40 icebreakers and China is rapidly building its own fleet, with a plan to launch a supersized nuclear-powered icebreaker this year.

The Administration's senseless funding cuts leave us vulnerable, unable to compete in a region of strategic importance where new shipping lanes and energy resources are rapidly emerging. There is a race in the polar regions that we are on track to lose under the current administration.

We have before us a panel that includes several voices from industry. Public-private partnerships have long driven advancements in ocean technology. However, these partnerships rely on a strong federal commitment to scientific research. Government, industry, and academia must work together to ensure that the U.S. remains a leader in climate resilience. Our national security and economic prosperity depend on American trained scientists and engineers remaining at the forefront of global scientific and technological innovation.

If the United States loses its capacity to lead in oceanic, atmospheric, and climate research, we will cede future technological breakthroughs to other nations. Our next generation of scientists will seek support elsewhere, creating a lasting setback for American interests. This is not a partisan issue. Science and innovation have long had bipartisan support, and we must reaffirm our commitment to federally funded research and the scientists who do this critical work.

I yield back.